

# **Introduction to the Philosophy of Human Person**

**Quarter 1 – Module 7:  
The Human Person As An  
Embodied Spirit**

**Lesson**

**7**

**Recognition of How the  
Human Body Imposes Limits  
and Possibilities for  
Transcendence**



## ***What is It***

The time has come! Let's get started! Today's journey will help us identify and understand the Human Person as an Embodied Spirit has something to do with defining Man, Person, Human Being/Person, Personhood and Human Nature (Abella, 2016).

Man	It is traditionally used to represent the entire human race, but it is no longer accepted today. By being gender sensitive, it is defined as an adult male human being.
Person	It refers to an individual who possess self-awareness, self-determination, rational mind, free-will and the capacity to interact with other and with himself/herself.
Human Being/Person	It is a term that represents the entire human race. A being that has intelligence that can be both man, woman and children. A composite of body, mind and spirit.
Personhood	A general term refers to the state of being a person with unique, sacred and ethical status within him/herself.

Human Nature	A general term refers to the deepest and natural behavior of a person that distinguish human from animals. The collective traits that formed and considered the very essence of humanity.
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What is Human Person? Let's find out!

The human person has birth rights. Human person from time after time learned how to live beyond what was traditional through the various human evolutions from Hominid to Homo Sapiens or the Modern Human like learning the concept of power, politics and economics. These reasons served as basis which led to a more structured political and economic system. Thus, rights of an individual is considered.



“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

- Article 1, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) affirms that...

- All human persons have “human DIGNITY [**DANGAL** ng tao], and this dignity must be recognized and respected by all.”
- That is why every individual human person “must be recognized as an end in himself or herself, as a representative of humankind.” A human person must not be treated as means even for a good reason (Kant). To recognize human person as an “end in himself or herself” means that s/he (she and he) has to be respected because s/he deserves it and that is the right thing to do.  
**(Hindi marapat na gamitin ang tao kahit sa magandang dahilan kasi ang tao ay hindi bagay na ginagamit).**

These are examples of our human rights:

- The right to life
- The right to enjoying freedom of movement
- The right to receive education and training, and to be informed

Our human rights protect the value of the human person and human dignity.

## **A Human Person: A Composite of Body, Mind and Spirit**

### **Human Person as Body and Mind**

There are two general kinds to distinguish a human person: The Cognitive Self and the Physical Self. The Cognitive Self (something within and cannot be physically seen) is the essential components of a human persons that deals with THE WHAT OF A PERSON which includes human persons' belief, desire, dreams, and intentions. The other is one is the Physical Self (something can be seen in his/her physical appearance) which deals with the essential features of the human way of life or THE WHO OF A PERSON which includes his/her body type, strength and appearances.

### **What is Embodied Spirit? Let's find out!**

#### **The Observing Self and the Observed Self**

Embodied spirit is an animating core living within each of us. As embodied spirit, every human person has a self. In understanding the self, Kegan (1982) calls it a "reckoning of the spirit" based on Hegel's idea that, "The spirit is never at rest but always engaged in ever progressive motion, in giving itself a new form" (from Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Mind*). Hence, the evolution of the self is the unfolding of spirit.

The self has two aspects: one is the *observing self* and the other is the *observed self* (Wilber, 2000b). The observing self is aware of who or what we are, we say “I” or “I am.” The observed self refers to what we are aware of, for instance when we say, “I am this or that” (e.g., student, son/daughter) or “I have this or that” (things that you have).

### **Human Person as Spirit: The Observing Self**

In Judaism *ruach* refers to “the divine spirit in every human person”, it is the core of your being (**ang banal na diwa** (divine spirit) **ay nasa kaibuturan ng iyong pagkatao**) and in Christianity *pneuma* refers to “the spirit that dwells in every human person is of one essence with God” (Wilber, 1998).



Photo from: <https://angelsandcelestials.tumblr.com/post/103122385263/22-signs-that-you-are-embodying-your-higher-self>

St. Catherine says, “My being is God, not by simple participation, but by a true transformation of my Being. My *me* is God” (Wilber, 1998).

For example, "Where love is, there God is also" (Leo Tolstoy), so whenever we do acts of kindness and love we transform ourselves into the essence of God.

When we say “embodied spirit”, we normally believe and conclude of a spirit becoming human flesh (body). In Christian philosophy, the embodiment of the spirit particularly refers to the inseparable union of human body and soul/spirit.

### **The Observed Self is Evolving**

What is Human Person as Embodied Spirit? Let's find out!

As an embodied spirit human beings demonstrate these following qualities (Abella, 2016):

1. "Self-awareness refers to person having a clear perception of oneself, including his or her thoughts, emotions, identity, and actions (Abella, 2016)." The self is the subject that thinks, feels and acts. The self represents man's interiority (loob in Filipino).
2. A human person is able to connect and interact with other persons, an animal or an inanimate object. We are able to go beyond our limited selves and embrace others.
3. We are not determined by others. We can direct the course of our own life. This is what we call self-determination which is "the capability of persons to make choices and decisions based on their own preferences, monitor and regulate their actions, and be goal oriented and self-directed" (Abella 2016). Thus human beings are free. However since our actions are based on our decisions we have to realize that every decision has a consequence(s). Good intentions and good actions lead to good consequences and bad intentions and actions lead to bad consequences.
4. Finally a human person has an inherent value and importance. This is what we call dignity. That is why no amount of money can equal the value of a human life. This is also the reason why individual rights are absolute (Rand 1964). The American Founding Fathers called rights as "inalienable" because it cannot be separated from our humanity. If we are stripped off of our rights we are stripped of our humanity.

### **Human Transcendence**

St. Thomas Aquinas, a philosopher and theologian, said that "of all creatures, human beings have the unique power to change themselves and things for the better." (Ramos, 2016). We have encountered persons who complain of any given situations or accept the reality or status in life as God-given thing. We heard a man sighing on TV during the early stage of Covid-19, "mahirap maging mahirap." Though it is true that poverty is not just personal but also structural, as an individual person you know that you can do something to change the situation. This power is your ability to surpass your limits. This is the definition of Transcendence. You are able to transcend your limit through your physical and mental abilities. (Abella, 2016).

Religion and philosophy teach human beings to overcome our limits. In technological parlance, humans can upgrade themselves. Take for example, Buddhism. Buddha realized that all people suffer. Maybe in your case you just accept your own suffering as part of life but not for Buddha. This reality ignited his curiosity to examine and understand the word suffering. He left his royal life in the palace and spent his life for 6 years in the wilderness to find answers for his questions. The Eightfold Paths of Buddhism lead to goodness and good life, and a way out of suffering. The Eightfold Paths are shown below:

1. Right view- a correct understanding of the nature of things;

2. Right intention - eliminating thoughts of attachment, detestation, and harmful intent;
3. Right speech - abstaining from verbal offenses such as lying, divisive speech, unforgiving speech, and irrational speech;
4. Right action - refraining from physical offenses such as murdering, thieving, and sexual misbehavior;
5. Right livelihood - evading trades that directly or indirectly damage others, intoxicants, or poisons (drugs);
6. Right effort - forsaking undesirable states of mind that have already arisen, preventing undesirable states that have yet to arise, and sustaining positive states that have already arisen;
7. Right concentration - single-mindedness; and
8. Right mindfulness, consciousness of body, feelings, thought, and phenomena.

These are the values what human person needs to succeed. These are examples of the power mentioned by St. Thomas to change ourselves. If you can do the eightfold path even if you are not a Buddhist, you can transform yourselves from your present situation and transcend to what you desire you would be. Just believe in yourselves.